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Pillow Book: Genre Analysis

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Pillow Book: Genre Analysis

1. Introduction

- Genre corresponds with the generic concepts in literary studies
- Genre as a means of categorisation that is dependent on the reception by its interpretating community

2. Possible Genres that can be applied on Pillow Book

- *Love Story / Tragedy:* Jerome as the
  - **perfect calligrapher** ("full-body erotic calligraphy") and the
  - **perfect lover** in one ➔ Contrast to Nagiko´s ex-husband (refused to paint on her face on her birthday)
  - cf. Mira NAIR: *Kama Sutra - A Tale of Love* (1996).
    - Sex and tradition
- *Revenge Tragedy:* 13th book: *The Dead.* Nagiko takes revenge on the **publisher**, because he has blackmailed her father. He is also the reason for Jerome´s suicide and he defiled his dead body.
  - cf. Pedro ALMODOVAR: *Live flesh* (1997).
    - Sex and revenge
- *Biographical Film* (real Pillow Book as parallelism to Nagiko´s life)
- *Arts Film* (the art of calligraphy as film-subject in correspondence to Musical / Dance Films)

3. Excursus: Non-Genre Categories

- Animated Films, Childrens/Kids/Family Films, Cult Films, Documentary Films, Serial Films, Silent Films
- British Films ↔ Non British Cinema

  Pillow Book as non British Cinema

  → film title
  → actors
  → setting
  → plot
  → language

➔ Discussion

Sources:

- GRANT, Barry Keith (ed.): *Film Genre Reader II*. Austin (University of Texas Press) 1995.
- FAULSTICH, Werner: *Die Filminterpretation* (Kleine Vandenhoeck Reihe 1537). Göttingen (Vandenhoeck und Rupprecht) 1988.
- http://www.filmsite.org/genres.html (15.1.2005).

Biographical Film:

In my opinion, the Pillow book can also be seen as a biographical film. Firstly, the film shows parts of Nagikos life and the effect of her childhood on her later life. In some parts of the film, there is a direct comparison of both life periods – they are shown at the same time by dividing the screen.

Secondly, the film and its title are refering to the Japanese slang word for diary and especially to the pillow book of Sel Shonagon, a Japanes court woman of the 10th century. The real Pillow book that is a mixture of a diary and an essay collection can therefore be seen as a parallelism to Nagiko´s life.

Art´s Film:

In correspondence to the common genre of music and dance films, the pillow book can be seen as an art´s film. Arts, in this case especially Calligraphy, is the main subject of the Pillow book. The film shows the obsession that art can have on people and the effects and consequences on their lives.